

25th November 2013**Agenda Item: 10****REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ADULT SOCIAL
CARE, HEALTH AND PUBLIC PROTECTION****TRANSPORT SERVICE POLICY****Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides Committee Members with information in respect of proposed policy changes concerning the provision of Transport Services and seeks Members' approval to consult on the proposals with people who use services, their carers and the public.
2. The review of the Transport Policy is highlighted within the Outline Business Case which was approved for consultation by Policy Committee on 13 November 2013. This report provides for the Committee to gain a fuller understanding of the policy proposals.

Information and Advice

3. The Council currently provides transport, or funding for transport, to approximately 1,370 people per week, using a variety of transport options including; internal fleet, contract coaches, taxis, and mileage payments for people using community transport or private vehicles. People are travelling to day services, short break/respite services or community based activities that meet assessed outcomes in their Community Care Assessment. Included in the 1,370 people are 222 older people who have not had a Community Care Assessment to determine their eligibility for services and transport and who are travelling to lunch clubs. Most people have transport arranged by the Council but a small proportion take a Direct Payment to fund their transport costs.
4. The transport charge of £5 per day is levied on each person towards their travel costs, except for lunch club attendees who pay £2 per day. The charge is the same whether the person has a single or return journey and whatever the distance or actual cost of the travel. In 2012/13, this charge generated £565,000 per annum of income for the Council. Some people are exempt from the charge and these exception criteria are described in the Transport Policy.
5. The Transport Policy was last reviewed in 2010. Eligibility criteria were clarified and the assessment process to determine eligibility was introduced.
6. The departmental transport budget for 2013/14 is forecast to overspend by £1 million by the end of the year. Reasons for this overspend are being explored. Action is required urgently

to address the situation so that the budget is brought back into balance. The Outline Business Case concerning transport sets out proposals to achieve this goal as follows:

- Review of the Transport Policy to focus available resources on those in most need of support with transport costs;
- Increasing income from individuals towards the cost of transport services and thereby reducing the County Council subsidy;
- Removing the provision of subsidised transport to lunch clubs for people who are not assessed as having critical and substantial needs; and
- Reducing the cost of transport provision

7. The aims of these changes are to:

- Ensure that transport services are only provided to individuals who cannot source alternative, independent travel
- Reduce the proportion of community care costs expended on transport services and the overall level of subsidy provided by the authority.
- Enable improved budget monitoring and financial management of transport expenditure

8. The review of the Transport Policy is a key aspect of this because the policy determines the volume of transport that should be funded by the Council. The revised Transport Policy is attached at Appendix A. The main changes are:

- That the Council will not assess eligibility for transport if people are already receiving Disability Living Allowance Mobility Component (at the High or Low rate). The Council believes it is reasonable to assume that people can meet their own travel needs through the funding provided by this benefit. However, there will be a new appeals process so that a client can explain why this assumption is unreasonable, in her/his individual situation, and ask for transport costs to be provided.
- Transport will not be provided to people who are attending residential respite care services. This transport is a discretionary provision and the Council does not have a statutory duty to provide this. However, the appeals process could be used to explain why transport to respite care should be provided in any individual circumstance.
- Clarification of what level of payment should be made to someone who takes a Direct Payment for transport and how the transport charge is applied in this situation.
- Removal of transport eligibility for people attending lunch clubs, unless the person is eligible for social care funded services, and attending that club is an agreed outcome within the person's support plan.

9. This report asks the Committee to approve this policy draft, for consultation as part of the Outline Business Case which is being consulted upon as per the Policy Committee report of 13 November 2013.

Other Options Considered

10. No other options.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. The redrafted Transport Policy is needed to support the Outline Business Case for Transport being consulted upon as part of the Council's budget challenge between November 2013 and January 2014, so it is appropriate that this policy should be consulted upon at the same time.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

13. The changes to the Transport Policy are expected to reduce the Council's cost by £0.6-£1 million per annum.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

14. The equality implications are all covered by the Equality Impact Assessment that has been developed for the Transport Outline Business Case.

Implications for Service Users

15. The implications of the proposed Transport Policy are that the following groups of people will have to fund their own transport and make their own arrangements in future:

- People who receive Disability Living Allowance Mobility Component will have any current transport funding and/or provision withdrawn, unless they appeal successfully to have it continued based on their individual circumstance. There are 613 people who have transport funded at the moment who are known to receive a Mobility Component.
- People who receive transport to residential respite services will have that transport withdrawn unless they appeal successfully to have it continued based on their individual circumstance. There are 313 people with learning disabilities attending residential respite at the moment but information is still being gathered about how many of them have transport provided.
- There are 222 people who attend lunch clubs with transport provided by the Council, who will have that transport withdrawn.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that the Adult Social Care and Health Committee:

- 1) Approve the redrafted Transport Policy as the basis for consultation alongside the Outline Business Case for Transport Services.
- 2) Agree to receive a further report once the consultation has been completed.

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Constitutional Comments (SHB 7/11/13)

16. The Committee has the power to decide the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (KAS 13/11/13)

17. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 13 of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Equality Impact Assessment

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All

ASCH174